

Public Comment by Adeline Wilcox

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Although I already knew Differential Privacy and other new Disclosure Avoidance methods will diminish the utility of decennial Census and American Community Survey data, not until I read a Louisiana State University environmental health report did I realize how destructive Differential Privacy will be. As we have seen, 2020 Census Disclosure Avoidance System processing scrambles data, producing untrue counts at the lowest levels of Census geography.

Investigators performed a mosquito vector proliferation study using census blocks as the analytical unit¹. The Louisiana State University researchers summarized 2010 Census population at the census block level. At the census block group level, the environmental science and public health researchers tabled what they called 2017 American Community Survey median household income.

I expect this Baton Rouge, Louisiana mosquito vector production study will be repeated to evaluate mosquito abatement and blight reduction efforts. Perhaps researchers will also want to look at Census Tract data. But Differential Privacy will diminish the utility of census block and census block group counts and estimates, making confident longitudinal analysis of Census and American Community Survey data more difficult or impossible.

¹de Jesús Crespo, Rebeca et al. Mosquito Vector Production across Socio-Economic Divides in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* vol. 18,4 1420. 3 Feb. 2021, doi:10.3390/ijerph18041420